



# *The HPD News*

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## **Houston Police Department Almost Back To Normal One Year After Tropical Storm Allison**

The fury of Tropical Storm Allison began on Friday, June 8, 2001. By Saturday morning, floodwaters had paralyzed much of the city. Homes, businesses, and even the Houston Police Department suffered damage.

While some of the divisions suffered minimal losses such as damaged computers or cars, others were not so lucky.

The HPD Dive Team is still recovering. Its operations were located at 27 Artesian, but after five feet of water flooded the building, officers were displaced and forced to store their equipment in the SWAT facility on Dallas Street.

"We worked out of our cars for a week," said Officer Don Ritchey (Dive Team). The Dive Team officers are currently using the third floor of the 33 Artesian Building for their base of operations.

A hand-held camera used during searches and able to record images underwater was lost during the flood.

"We're doing everything by hand," said Officer Ritchey. "The diver goes underwater and feels around until he finds what he's looking for."

Municipal Courts 6, 7, and 8 at 1400 Lubbock reopened in May. Two more courts are expected to open in July. The video arraignment section of the city jail is still out of service but should be back in operation within a few months.

Class "C" male prisoners can now be booked at the Central Jail.

"It's improved for the street officers because they don't have to drive all the way to Mykawa (Southeast Station) to book Class 'C' prisoners," said Lieutenant Patrick Dougherty (Central Jail).

Despite the progress, the Central Jail is still feeling the effects from Allison. The old laundry facility and trustee dormitories were located at the police garage at 1202 Washington. That building has now been condemned. Prisoners are temporarily staying on the fifth floor at 61 Riesner.

The Emergency Communications Division will soon be moving to their new facility on North Shepherd Drive, which will be called the Houston Emergency Center (HEC). "No major modifications or repairs are planned since ECD is moving," said Captain D.W. Ready (Emergency Communications Division). "However, ECD is fully operational. We are back to pre-Allison status."



**Tropical Storm Allison was one of the worst natural disasters the Houston area has ever experienced. Heavy rains began falling on June 8, 2001, and wreaked such havoc that much of the city is still recovering. (Photo by Dave Einsel, Houston Chronicle.)**

## Chief's Column

Summer is almost upon us and that means that thousands of Houston area children will soon be on vacation from school. It is imperative that we, as adults, provide a safe and enriching environment for them during this time.

The officers at Southeast Patrol have embraced this philosophy since 1990 when they began the Southeast Patrol Summer Camp in response to several calls for service about youngsters causing trouble at area apartment complexes.

All of the participating officers volunteer their time and help organize field trips for the participants to visit educational

and fun places like the Wortham IMAX Theatre, the Houston Arboretum, the Houston Zoo, or Space Center Houston.

During the school year, the officers visit the children's schools to discuss the summer camp and hand out enrollment applications. The Southeast Patrol Summer Camp has become so popular with young people that they sometimes do not wait for the officers to visit their schools. The youth will call the department and ask how they can enroll!

The program is financed by many of the businesses in the area, and the City of Houston Parks and Recreation Summer Lunch Program provides the children's lunches. The program is open to children between six

and fifteen years of age who live in District 13 or 14. Some of the camp's past participants have returned to talk about their experiences and become role models.

The Southeast Patrol Summer Camp will be in session from June 10 through June 28, July 8 through July 19, and July 22 through August 9. Organizers for this year's camps expect 70 children will attend each session.

I would like to wish all of Houston's young people a safe and enjoyable summer vacation.



**Chief of Police C.O. "Brad" Bradford**



Assistant Chief N.D. Wong (Professional Development Command) presents a promotion certificate to Deborah Goldman (Chief's Command) who was promoted to Administrative Coordinator at a recent Civilian Promotion Ceremony. Also promoted were Robert Alex, Carolyn Alves, William Curry, Jr., Joe Evans, Terry Harris, Bernadette Hernandez, Phyllis Joseph, Amy Kaehler, Douglas Martinson, Rhonda McKinney, Darla Osborne, Marilyn Scott, Cynthia Vela, Angela Williams, Joslyn Williams, Pamela Williamson, and Marion Wilson.

## HPD Celebrates Multi-Cultural Diversity

Since 1991, the HPD Multi-Cultural Reception has provided an opportunity for positive interaction between different cultures, police officers, and citizens in a comfortable social setting. This year's reception will be held on July 11.

Historically, each ethnic group in Houston has celebrated its cultural holidays according to custom and tradition. At the Multi-Cultural Reception, people from all walks of life can enjoy and learn from the experience.

The Multi-Cultural Reception showcases a variety of ethnic foods and cultural fashions while giving attendees an opportunity to meet the department's Command Staff, officers, and civilian employees.

The Multi-Cultural Reception is totally underwritten by private corporations and donations. For more information on this year's event contact Mike Edmonds in the Community Outreach Division at (713) 308-9122.

## This Month in HPD History: June

Do you remember the last time a call to HPD actually “dropped” to a police radio dispatcher? If so, that dates you. Since the introduction of modern dispatching systems, such as the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system in the seventies, calls no longer literally “drop” from a call taker’s hands to a dispatcher.

In June 1951, the media took interest in the high volume of calls the department was handling. The report compared 1940, when there were 67,000 calls for service, to the first three months of 1951, when there were 103,000. There were only four call takers in one room who wrote the details of the call on a slip of paper. The “call slips” were then placed on a conveyor belt and dropped to one of five dispatchers in a smoke-filled, tension-driven room on a lower floor.

Compare that scenario to 2001 when call takers handled approximately 2.6 million calls using CAD. Today call takers and dispatchers are in the same room, and while there is still tension in the air at times, there is no smoke. And those call slips? They still come in handy if CAD fails, like in June 2001 when Tropical Storm Allison blew through and the Emergency Communications Division lost power, forcing it to revert to its “old fashioned” ways.

## National Night Out 2002

Even though summer is just beginning, many people are looking ahead to August 6 and the annual National Night Out celebration in Houston.

National Night Out is a crime prevention program that encourages citizens and police officers to meet and discuss strategies to keep their communities safe. People are encouraged to come outdoors and meet their neighbors in an effort to combat crime in their area. Many citizens plan events to coincide with National Night Out. It can be as easy as grilling hamburgers on a barbecue pit in the front yard. Some people plan parades and block parties. No event is too small or too big.

Contact the Community Services Division at (713) 308-3200 to find out what you can do to participate in National Night Out 2002.

## Kickboxing at HPD Wellness Center



The staff at the 1200 Travis Wellness Center hopes more HPD employees get a kick out of exercising.

Department Intern Cynthia Berry is instructing a new Fitness/Kickboxing class and currently has seven employees in training. “Most people who have taken the class say they have felt much stronger and have better flexibility by the next week,” said Berry. “I do not force anyone to do what he or she cannot do. It is all about what your body is comfortable doing and how far it will allow you to go.”

In June, the class will be held Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the Wellness Center on the 22<sup>nd</sup> floor.

Berry will graduate from the University of Houston-Clear Lake this summer with a Bachelor of Science in Fitness and Human Performance. She said she decided to teach the cardio-kickboxing class after being an instructor at the Martial Arts Academy in League City.

For more information on the Fitness/Kickboxing class, contact the Wellness Center at (713) 308-1298.



## Blue Knights Ride For Children

Police officers work hard and they play hard. During their relaxation time you may find them golfing, bowling, singing, or cycling together. For the past 26 years, the Blue Knights have blazed a trail for charity on their motorcycles.

The Blue Knights is an international organization of peace officers. If you have a vision of a leather-clad, cigar-chomping guy on a Harley-Davidson, guess again. The president of the Texas chapter of the Blue Knights is Officer Patti

Hamm (Hedwig Village Police). About fifty percent of the chapter's current members are HPD officers. Officer Earnest Boyd, Jr. (South Central Division) is a past chapter president.

During the Blue Knights' "Ride for Kids" fundraiser in April 2002, they put together a seven-mile long caravan of nearly 800 motorcycles that traveled to the Montgomery County Fair Grounds to benefit the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation. In June 2002, they will take part in Mayor Lee P. Brown's fundraiser to assist more than 300 children with different forms of muscular dystrophy. To learn more about the Blue Knights, visit their Web site at [www.blueknights.org](http://www.blueknights.org).



**Blue Knights at the "Ride for Kids" fundraiser in April 2002.**

## HPD Employee "Lets The Dogs Out!"

HPD Administrative Associate Libby McLachlan (Crime Analysis Division) starts many of her weekends by "releasing the hounds" in a little-known sport called Flyball, a team sport invented in the 1970s for dogs and humans.

Flyball involves four dogs acting in a relay team jumping over four hurdles spaced out over a fifty-one foot track. Each dog jumps the hurdles and hits a spring-loaded box at the end of the track. A tennis ball shoots out of the box, the dog catches it and then runs back over the hurdles to the starting line. The races are



**Libby McLachlan and "Spuds" compete at a Flyball event.**

timed and the first team of dogs to complete the course wins the heat. Competition is fierce as the dogs continue competing against other teams in their division and eventually are named champions.

Libby has trained "Spuds," her five-year-old Beagle-Pit Bull mix, to compete in Flyball tournaments. He is a Flyball dog champion and will soon earn a Flyball Master title. Libby and "Spuds" got involved in Flyball as part of his obedience training after he was adopted from South Texas Animal Adoption Resources (formerly PALS) in Katy, Texas. To learn more about Flyball, visit the Web site at [www.flyball.org](http://www.flyball.org).